Raising of H1-B Visa

4908. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether during President Clinton's visit to India recently, India had asked to raise H1-B visas from 1,15,000 to 1,95,000 over a period of three years; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) During the recent visit of President Clinton to India, discussions were held on a wide range of issues of mutual interest including cooperation in field of hi-technology. However, there was no specific discussion on H1-B Visas.

(b) Does not arise

Strategic Consultations with Britain

4909. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister to EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that India does not have a formal treaty so far with Britain on holding "periodic strategic consultations" similar on the lines of the one started with Germany and already shared with France, Russia and other countries;

(b) whether the British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook's reported official meeting held in New Delhi on 17.4.2000 with him being seen "in the inauguration of such a permanent institution"; and

(c) if so, what are the details/outcome of discussion held between him and Foreign Minister of India and U.K.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) While India does not have a formal treaty with Britain, there are periodic high-level consultations between the two countries, both at the Ministerial and officials levels.

(b) and (c) The visit to India by Mr. Robin Cook, British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs from 15—18 April 2000, referred to in the Hindustan Times news item of 16th April 2000, was in response to an official invitation by Government of India. The discussions held during the visit have contributed to an enhanced understanding on bilateral issues as

well as on developments in India's neighbourhood, non-proliferation and disarmament and on international terrorism. In this context, both sides agreed to pursue the dialogue on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament at the level of senior officials.

Issues Discussed in NAM Meet

4910. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the specific issues discussed at the Conference of the Non-aligned Foreign Ministers meet in Colombia and what has been the outcome thereof; and

(b) how far India has succeeded in isolating military junta of Pakistan in the international arena?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) The recent Ministerial Conference of Non-aligned countries held in Cartagena, Colombia discussed a wide range of political, economic, environmental as well as social issues. The Conference adopted a Final Document as well as a Declaration on the Millennium Summit and issued a Call from Cartagena to sustain the Africa Momentum.

(b) India supports the principle of democracy. As a result of India's efforts, the Final Document of the XIIth NAM Ministerial Meeting adopted a call for restoration, before the next OAU Summit, of constitutional legality in States whose governments had come to power through unconstitutional means and also strongly recommended that this issue may be considered by NAM at its next Summit.

Earlier, due to India's efforts the Commonwealth Summit at Durban, November 1999 adopted a Communique condemning the unconstitutional overthrow of the democratically elected Government in Pakistan on 12th October, 1999.